

Honorable Members of the House Government Operations Committee,

I write you today to voice my opposition to SB 652, which I understand will be before your committee this Tuesday, November 5. As a member of the Ingham County Board of Commissioners, where the current Court of Claims resides within our 30th Judicial Circuit Court, I am disappointed the bill sponsor, Senator Rick Jones, did not consult our County Officials on his proposed bill.

Since 1978, the Revised Judicature Act of 1961 placed the Court of Claims within the 30th Ingham County Circuit Court. My belief is the Court of Claims was placed in the Ingham County Circuit because all of the State Government departments are in Lansing/Ingham County.

As the saying goes, "if it isn't broke, don't fix it". There has been no explanation as to why this bill is prudent in the mind of Senator Jones and being fast tracked through the legislative process. I don't see anything wrong with the current setup as outlined in the Revised Judicature Act of 1961. This bill will remove a level of review, which is currently done by the Circuit Court Judges, and sends cases directly to the Appeals Court. The Appeals Court was set up to review appeals of decisions by litigants based on the Circuit Court process. This will leave no option but the Michigan Supreme Court for litigants to appeal the decisions of the Court of Claims.

Currently, the 30th Judicial Circuit is in two occasions. Its advantageous for one of the locations being in downtown Lansing, which is within walking distance to the Michigan Attorney Generals office, whose Assistant Attorney Generals represents the State in all of these cases. The Michigan Court of Appeals Judges move their courts to various locations within the state, which may make it harder for litigants to travel to and incur travel expenses to the State of Michigan for the Assistant Attorney Generals who represent the State in these cases.

The Ingham County Board of Commissioners recently approved our 2014 budget, which included expenditures for nearly \$450,000 for Court of Claims activities.

I ask you slow down this proposed legislation and send this bill back to the Michigan Senate with the instructions to take a deliberative look at the impact for Ingham County and the State of Michigan, since the biggest impact of this bill will be drastic on us.

In Service,

Bryan

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